

PRESS RELEASE

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Contacts: Joe Ferson, 617-626-1119
Dan Driscoll, 617-626-1438

ROMNEY ADMINISTRATION OPENS BLUE HERON BRIDGE AND 1-MILE GREENWAY CORRIDOR ALONG UPPER CHARLES RESERVATION

The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) today celebrated the completion of Phase 3A of the Upper Charles Greenway Reclamation Project at the site of the new pedestrian Blue Heron Bridge off Pleasant Street in Watertown.

With the previous completion of nearly four new miles of river corridor greenways along the Upper Charles River Reservation, today's opening brings near the vision of a continuous public access and green space along most of DCR's Upper Charles River Reservation.

"The vision for the Upper Charles River Restoration Project was formed over 15 years ago and planning, design and construction as been on-going for over 10 years," said DCR Commissioner Stephen H. Burrington. "We are now nearing our goal of providing Metropolitan Boston with one of the finest and longest urban river greenway corridors in the country."

That vision involves a continuous corridor connecting Boston's western suburbs of Newton, Weston, Watertown and Waltham with the Esplanade pathways along the Charles River in Boston and Cambridge. Phase 3A, and the soon to be completed 3B and 3C, include the five critical missing links along this section of the Charles greenway system.

The new greenway was designed through the woods in Newton beginning at Bridge Street, up to Cheesecake Brook. At the Brook a new footbridge, the Blue Heron Bridge, 10 feet wide and approximately 140 long, now crosses over the Charles River connecting to woodland on the opposite bank in Watertown. A new path has also been constructed out to Farwell Street in Waltham. Construction was funded by the federal government and DCR. During the event, DCR recognized five private partners for their support of the project: Meredith Management Corporation, Stop & Shop Supermarket Company, Boston Scientific Corporation, West Seyon LLC, and MGE Holding Company.

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251 Causeway Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02114
(617) 626-1250
(617) 626-1351 FAX
www.mass.gov/dcr

MITT ROMNEY
Governor

KERRY HEALEY
Lt. Governor

STEPHEN R. PRITCHARD
Secretary, EOE



“I want to personally thank Transportation Secretary John Cogliano and Mass Highway Commissioner Paiewonsky for their flexibility in partnering with DCR and allowing us to have oversight of the design and construction of the entire project,” Burrington added. “Without their help in securing federal Transportation Efficiency Act funds and their collaboration, what you see here today would simply not have been possible.”

This new section is among the final segments of the recently developed 6-mile corridor above Watertown Square that links the Upper Charles River Reservation and its surrounding communities of Watertown, Waltham, Newton, Weston, providing an uninterrupted 14-mile river greenway corridor in Metropolitan Boston. Unlike the Basin, however, these 6 miles have primarily been designed and developed for wildlife habitat and enhanced water quality, providing urban residents an opportunity to connect with nature in their own communities.

Only two more phases of this overall project remain. New greenways in Watertown Square, downtown Waltham and the Woerd Avenue Boat Launch area are under construction and due to be completed this fall. The final phase – the Elm Street to Moody Street connection – is completely designed and permitted with funding being sought for construction. The small key connection to downtown Waltham will then mean the full realization of the vision for the restored Upper Charles Reservation.

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